

**BT/CT/RAD Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 9, 2011, 10:00 AM**

Attendees: Julie Nassif, Cheryl Gauthier, Jennifer Jenner, Caryn Conley, Franny Elson, Tom Coulombe, Tracy Stiles, Deb Carter, Gloria Cheng, and Sydney Fuller-Jones

Facilitator: Julie Nassif

Recorder: Sydney Fuller-Jones

Next Meeting: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am – 11:00am, Lobby Conference Room

- Cheryl reported that there have been three training sessions held here at the Lab for Law Enforcement, FBI, State, Boston and Cambridge Haz Mat, MBTA Police, Boston Police, and CST that many people participated in. Trainings went very well. There were 30 minute presentations; divided into three groups on the BT, CT, and RAD Labs, as well as tours in all but the BT Lab. Instead of touring the BT Lab, the Training Lab was set up with different stations so that they could be shown how an unknown is processed. They were also shown what lab equipment would look like if they came across it, so as to tell the difference between what a virus culture might look like opposed to how an anaerobe chamber would look. The stations also had a bench for the powders including materials for making ricin toxin. A lot of positive feedback was received. Being that some of the different groups were unable to attend; Cheryl would like to offer the training at least one more time, maybe in the winter (Nov, Dec, or Jan) for those who have expressed interest in attending.
- Cheryl felt that Jennifer's presentation was very informative; with all of the individual cases that have been taking place, especially with the abundance of cyanide and chemical suicide cases. Jennifer asked how many of the attendees had training on how to respond to these types of cases, and it was surprising to hear that only the State Haz Mat Team had.
- Julie expressed that this shows the need for a more consistent training programs in these areas; especially if Boston and Cambridge are not included in the State training, where these are the areas where we might have more of these types of incidents.
- Jennifer stated in conducting research for her presentation at the State Haz Mat Conference, she learned of a particular suicide method called helium suicide (Exit Bag). A 29 year old Oregon man used this method. There was a 91 year old woman in California who the FBI put out of business in May. For \$60 she would provide a kit of instructions along with a collar sewn plastic bag that you could fasten a nitrogen or helium tank with a tube to hook it up in order for one to meet their demise. It was found disturbing that such a young person would seek out and access this method to commit suicide.
- Both Cheryl and Jennifer will give presentations at the State Haz Mat Conference in September 2011 on The Overviews of the Laboratory, complete with informational case studies, clinical samples with mixed responses.
- Tom stated from a radiological point of view that after the last training session, there was the incident at the O'Neil Building. A few of the Police present were involved in that incident. Those in attendance were shown the closet where the High Tech Transit is being held. The

Transit is still here, as they are waiting for EPA to tell them how it will be properly disposed of. It may go to a museum (would have to be negotiated with NRC), or be put on display behind the USS Constitution behind some lucite. It is no longer used here, out West it would be a surveying tool, whereas here it is of no use. There were very few questions asked of him other than by Special Agent Spice.

- Deb who was handling the microscopes; said that she received only one question of her and that was, "were the organisms (*Yersinia Pestis* and Anthrax) on the slides live?" and her answer was no. They were affixed (heat sealed) to the slides and stained, which automatically makes them inactive.
- Deb updated the group on several Agents of Bioterrorism trainings coming up on September 28<sup>th</sup>, October 12<sup>th</sup>, and November 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will also be classes on Bio Safety/Bio Security thru APHL and NLTN. Shoolah with NLTN will give the training, and she will train Deb and Tanya during a 2 day class on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Once the training is complete; Deb and Tanya will be able to give a seminar here or on the road, teaching a target audience of basically anyone who deals with organisms geared towards Bio (i.e. Research Labs...).
- There are two Analytical Chemistry trainings coming up entitled "CT Hospital Response to Chemical Emergency". The first is a refresher class in October at Norwood Hospital, followed by a regular class on November 4<sup>th</sup>, here at the State Lab.
- Cheryl was questioning if the Local Board of Health Trainings would be brought back. It seems as if when Kathleen McAllister (Radiation Control) left, the Local Board of Health Trainings went away. Julie say that it is probably time to resurrect the trainings in a more streamlined way, offering it here rather than trying to stretch out across the regions. Tom suggested getting a lot of the Boards of Health to attend the meeting out West that is usually held in November.
- BT Lab is continuing to receive clinical specimens to rule out BT agents, such as those responsible for tularemia, plague, and brucellosis.
- Franny says, cook your turkey well. With only 1 case; and 1 case pending in Massachusetts, there has been a call to expand the recall on Cargo (ground turkey due to the *Salmonella* outbreaks that are surfacing. She says that it's not such officially considered a contaminant, since a report was done that concluded that two thirds of all poultry has *Salmonella*. Franny says that the recall is sending a weird Public Health message. Otherwise, it has been fairly quiet up there. There have been little PFGE Clusters, but nothing out of the ordinary. White powders have been quiet. Epi's have been told that Tularemia Serology testing is not being offered until BD has resolved its expiration issues with new lots.
- Cheryl stated that all tularemia serology is being sent to CDC in Ft. Collins, due to all of BD's lots of reagents have expired.